

May 21, 2011

Dear House Ag Committee:

My name is Jamie Lannen, president of Park County Stockgrowers' Association (PCSG). On behalf of PCSG, I am requesting your support FOR SB 237.

PCSG is a local producer membership organization working on behalf of local cattle producers in Park County, Montana. Not surprisingly, those of us producers living and/or operating in and around the Greater Yellowstone area are extremely concerned about the spread of brucellosis among our wildlife AND increasing likelihood of transmission to our cattle herds. The risk of brucellosis transmission to our livestock has never been greater especially considering the radical change in wildlife migration patterns the past few years.

As anyone remotely familiar with the cattle industry knows, maintaining our state's "Brucellosis Free Status" is paramount to our ability to continue marketing world class cattle around the globe. The sheer stigma of selling cattle originating from the Greater Yellowstone area has proven to be both extremely difficult and costly with significant discounts and/or testing measures being demanded by many buyers across the mid-west. Quite frankly, the "costs" and seemingly "changing rules of the game" have forced many producers to the brink of collapse.

Many Park County producers have willingly and voluntarily elected to cooperate with both Federal and State agencies to the fullest extent in addressing wildlife/livestock transmission of brucellosis. Sadly, producer cooperation in and of itself has fallen far short of addressing the more pressing issue: *Increasing wildlife infection rates*.

SB 237 is the first and only bill that realistically addresses the wildlife aspect of this growing problem. For example, SB 237:

- Creates "Real Life" and flexible provisions that provide for a flexible Designated Surveillance Area (DSA) to better address the dynamic realities of operating within such a complicated ecosystem.
- Relieves the growing financial burden on livestock producers. Park County ranching operations cannot continue to endure the added costs of operating under historic conditions further exasperated by the market stigma of marketing cattle raised in brucellosis prone area.
- Requires state agencies to address the growing infection rate in our elk herds rather than focusing solely on our cattle which have proven to be merely symptomatic.
- Allows the use of Per Capita but requires that any other state and/or federal funding sources be used first therefore preserving per capita funds for other dept. programs.
- Fulfills new rules from USDA APHIS which requires that states with diseased wildlife develop a disease plan for livestock AND the diseased wildlife species.
- Ensures that the agencies are communicating with livestock producers in an ongoing fashion. Information must flow both ways given the evolving nature of this disease.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Jamie Lannen, Park County Stockgrowers  
P.O. Box 34, Clyde Park, MT 406-686-4214

Bar 7 Ranch

George Boyd, Manager ( 406)682-4842

45 Bar 7 Lane, Ennis MT 59729

3/19/2011

Dear House Agriculture Committee,

My name is George Boyd. I have been employed as manager of the Bar 7 Ranch South of Ennis for the past 16 months. In that time I have spent a substantial amount of time and effort complying with rules created to prevent the spread of Brucellosis. We have bled our cows, vaccinated replacement heifers, worked with State vets to make a herd plan, put state EID tags in the cows, attempted to keep cows from co-mingling with elk and generally tried to cooperate with the MDOL in every way we could. I must admit to being frustrated when, even though there have been no new cases of Bangs in Montana cattle, more costly measures for prevention are being implemented. It seems with the current trend that we are going deeper and deeper into a pit of costly regulations without a plan to get it filled back in.

I am supporting SB 237 because it

1. Offers hope of an end to excessive testing if no new cases of Brucellosis are found.
2. Creates flexibility in the DSA to help make prevention measures practical.
3. Gives the MFWP some incentive to attempt to find solution, or at least some mitigation, to the Brucellosis problem in wildlife.
4. Improves communication between state agencies and livestock producers.
5. SB 237 is potentially a first step toward a solution for the root of our Brucellosis problem, the disease reservoir we have in Yellowstone National Park.

Sincerely yours,

George Boyd

March 18, 2011

Montana House Agriculture Committee  
Helena, Montana

Dear Agriculture Committee Members:

My name is Arthur Burns. My wife Cathy and I live near Pray, in Paradise Valley, and operate a typical cow/calf operation. We have been following developments related to the transmission of brucellosis from wildlife to cattle with keen interest, as it was our heifer that became infected two years ago – the second in Montana in two years, resulting in Montana losing its coveted brucellosis-free status. The experience was a nightmare. Although we had participated in the State's voluntary mitigation plan and had vaccinated our herd for brucellosis, we still had an infection transmission. Genetic testing of the bacteria by the USDA determined elk to be the transmission agent.

As a cattle producer and stakeholder in the DSA, I am writing to ask you to vote for SB237. As originally developed, the DSA does not do enough to address the fundamental problem faced by cattle producers in the GYA: brucellosis infection in wildlife. SB237 will require FWP and DOL to address this root problem. Further, SB237 complies with USDA APHIS mandated cattle AND wildlife brucellosis mitigation efforts. Finally, SB237 creates a mechanism whereby we can work our way out of these burdensome and expensive restrictions and eventually eliminate the need for the DSA. As it stands now, without the passage of SB237, the DSA will be with us forever.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Arthur Burns  
PO Box 154  
Pray, MT 59065  
406-333-4600

House Agriculture Committee  
Dear Representative,

SB 237 is a common sense bill that addresses problems caused by diseased wildlife in the area surrounding Yellowstone National Park.

I am a retired banker with a long standing relationship with the agricultural community in Park County. I have followed the brucellosis problem from the beginning and I understand the emotional and financial burden this is having on our livestock producers in the surveillance area.

The Designated Surveillance Area (DSA) now in place causes significant financial issues for livestock producers within the DSA. Currently funding for livestock testing is split between the Department of Livestock per capita fees and the State general Fund. DOL per capita fees are taxes assessed against livestock producers on a per head basis. As amended, SB 237 reads that per capita may be used as long as State and Federal funds are used first.

SB 237 will not change the responsibility of the DOL in implementing the DSA or the FWP in testing elk. It does require these programs to continue for disease surveillance. It creates no additional costs but it does require the continued existence of these programs.

Please vote yes for SB 237.

Respectfully,

Harold Stewart Jr.  
406 West Summit St.  
Livingston, MT 59047

March 20, 2011

House Agriculture Committee,

I am drafting this letter to urge you to support SB 237. My interest in this issue is derived from raising my family and making a living managing cattle in the Paradise Valley.

This bill addresses three problems that we all recognized "on the front lines" from the very start; lack of communication, economic impact, and the source of the disease. SB 237 has been crafted by people who are living with the stress and fear that brucellosis brings to their life investment and their business and consequently you will not find a group of people better educated on the issue of brucellosis. They are truly the "leading experts" and also have the most at stake.

In the sweeping current of wildlife only, it is time that you not only support the efforts of these ranchers but get behind them and push! The ranches in the affected counties are an integral part of the economy, the communities, and the Yellowstone ecosystem. SB 237 is the help they need.

Sincerely,

Mark Rose

Foreman, Mountain Sky Guest Ranch  
P.O.Box 283  
Emigrant, Mt. 59027  
406-333-4024

March 20, 2011

To: Montana House Agricultural Committee

From: Allen Martinelli, President  
Lee Martinelli Co.  
P.O. Box 240077  
Dell, MT 59724

Please vote in favor of SB 237.

Reason: This bill gives direction to solving the brucellosis problem. The brucellosis problem at the present time is not prevalent in livestock. However, the threat of infection is always present because of the known occurrence in elk and bison. This problem increases our operation costs for labor, vaccine, facilities and increased stress on the cattle.

When our bottom line is less, we spend less or go out of business. In the past few years we have lost a lot of our ranching neighbors because of increased costs. These smaller ranches have become part of land owned by large mega ranches. The Nature Conservancy and the Red Rock Lakes Wildlife Refuge. Keep in mind that these land holders require less goods and services from local businesses. They also hire fewer people which affect our schools and local governments.

The bill also addresses a public health issue. There is never much said in all the rhetoric about brucellosis or Undulant Fever in humans. By allowing its existence in wildlife to spread there is always the threat of infecting humans through contact with diseased wildlife.

This bill contains a "sunset" provision that would protect ranchers from facing these added burdens continually.

SB 237 will help Montana meet federal requirements with USDA APHIS. It also aids in the communication with livestock producers and agencies.

Thank you for considering my concerns.

*Allen C. Martinelli*

**David & Janice Bowman  
Bowman Ranch**

P.O. Box 87  
Pray, MT 59065  
Phone: (406) 333-4001

► **Montana House Ag Committee**

Helena, MT 59627

Support for SB 237

---

**To Whom It May Concern,**

Since 1992, we have owned and operated a commercial cow/calf ranch at Pray, MT, which is in the Designated Surveillance Area for Brucellosis. We urge your support for Senate Bill 237.

The cost of testing for Brucellosis within the DSA should not be the burden of the producers. Brucellosis is being transmitted by public wildlife, and SB 237 relieves the financial burden that the DSA places on livestock producers. Higher input costs for ranchers decrease the profit margin and result in less money to support local businesses. This bill also requires state agencies to address the source of the disease in elk, without which, Brucellosis can continue to spread despite implementation of Brucellosis prevention procedures in cattle.

Please vote for Senate Bill 237.

Thank you for your attention.  
Sincerely,

---

**David & Janice Bowman**

3/21/2011

---

March 18, 2011

House Agricultural Committee:

Dear Committee Members,

I am a resident of the Paradise Valley which is part of the current DSA for brucellosis. I am writing to you to ask for your support for Senate Bill 237. This bill provides a much needed support and future direction for agricultural operations in our area as they fight to deal with a disease that is being transmitted by wildlife in the area. There are a great number of reasons to support this bill, including:

- It creates flexible provisions that allows for a flexible DSA. The DSA creates a market stigma which results in increased cost for testing and lower prices for cattle. This has a long term, negative effect on our local economy. Flexibility in the provisions will allow local agricultural producers to keep jobs in the community and support related industries that are dependent upon ranching.
- It requires state agencies to address the disease source (elk) and not just the symptom (cattle). We have procedures in place for cattle but without addressing the carrier (elk) we are only punishing the ranchers without addressing the source of the disease.
- It will stop the disease from spreading. Instead of expanding the DSA into new geographic areas as it appears, it requires the FWP work to eliminate the disease in the wildlife populations.
- The bill, while still allowing the use of per capita taxes for funding, requires that any other state or federal funding sources available be used first.
- Senate bill 237 fulfills federal requirements to develop disease plans for livestock AND diseased wildlife species. This bill makes sure that we are in compliance so that we can keep our Class Free Status.
- This bill addresses a potential public health issue. Brucellosis is not only a threat to livestock but is also a potential threat to humans.
- It preserves community composition – Support for our local ranchers is support for open space and the community's rural culture.
- This bill ensures that public agencies are communicating with local livestock producers which results in better public policy and more effective management of disease issues.

Once again, please support SB 237.

Sincerely

David Molebash      130 Bridger Hollow Rd., Pray, MT 59065

(406) 223-3412



March 18, 2011

Dear House Ag Committee,

I am writing to request your support of SB 237. As a livestock producer in the Greater Yellowstone Area the continued pressure of diseased wildlife is forcing our small, family owned business to question our viability. For the last three years livestock producers have been regulated on a scale of very severe to less severe. This regulation has created significant hardships and financial strain.

Consider this: Over the last two and a half years the state of Montana has tested well over 250,000 cattle and not found one diseased animal; yet, the seroprevalence in the elk and bison increases without any attempt to decrease or manage that seroprevalence. Livestock producers continue to manage their cattle to prevent disease using vaccination, testing, and spatial separation from wildlife.

Livestock producers cannot continue to bear the sole responsibility for the disease of brucellosis. We need help. SB 237 requires DOL and FWP to coordinate a seroprevalence reduction plan for diseased wildlife. This required management plan fulfills the USDA-APHIS mandates to maintain Class Free Status.

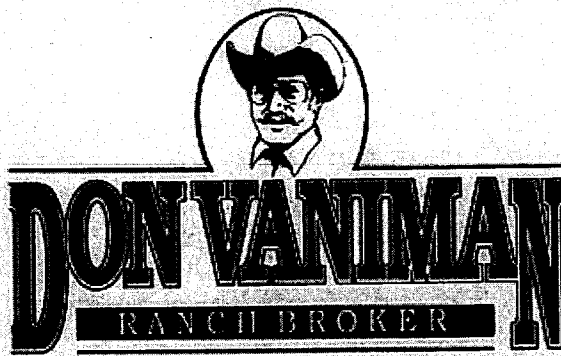
In reality the YNP bison are the reservoir of brucellosis while the elk are the vectors. Allowed to persist without management and intervention, the elk, in their efforts to avoid predator (wolves) pressure, will continue to spread the disease of brucellosis farther into the state of Montana. This shift in elk migratory patterns has the potential to expand the DSA boundaries. If these conditions are not met with a scientific approach to disease reduction, the brucellosis infection rate in wildlife will perpetuate, expand in territory, and increase unchecked.

SB 237 provides the funding stability for DSA requirements. Small family owned ranching operations need to know that their financial future is stable. Livestock producers add dollars to their communities. Other businesses will suffer if we no longer exist. The open space we all enjoy and the rural culture of our communities will be destroyed.

Please support SB 237. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Druska Kinkie  
769 East River Road  
Pray, MT 59065  
333-4345



March 21, 2011

My name is Don Vaniman, 5060 Westlake Road, Bozeman, MT 59718, 406-587-4250. I graduated from Montana State College in 1968, majoring in Animal Science. I have been a hired man on a purebred ranch in Florence, Montana; Executive Secretary of Montana Beef Performance Association; and Executive Secretary for American Simmental Association for 10 years. I have been a Ranch Broker since 1979.

Montana cattle are normally known for their outstanding genetics. We need to insure they are equally known for being healthy. I am asking you to vote "yes" on SB 237. Why should you vote yes? The following are all true:

- Creating flexible provisions results in a flexible DSA and relieves the financial burden on livestock producers. Forcing ranchers to bare costs and market stigma in perpetuity hurts county economy as higher testing costs (due to vaccines, tests, additional labor, lower cattle prices) mean smaller profit margins. SB 237 allows ranchers to keep profit, spend it locally, and keep hired help. It also helps support businesses that are dependent on ranching-i.e. implement dealers, trucking companies, ranch supply.
- Requires state agencies to address the disease source (elk) and not just the symptom (cattle). We have procedures in place for cattle, but without similar procedures for the disease carriers, we are not properly treating the disease. SB 237 prevents the disease from spreading. In February, FWP found brucellosis exposed elk in the Ruby Valley, outside the DSA. The state veterinarian is talking about expanding the DSA based on this information. SB 237 would require FWP to reduce seroprevalence in their elk, which would reduce the likelihood of the DSA expanding further.
- The bill, while still allowing the use of per capita, requires that any other state or federal funding sources be used first. This has the potential to decrease the impact to the per capita, allowing it to be used for other department programs.
- SB 237 fulfills federal requirements. New rules from USDA APHIS require that states with disease wildlife develop a disease plan for livestock AND the diseased wildlife species. This bill makes sure that we are in compliance so we can keep our Class Free Status.
- This bill addresses a potential public health issue by addressing diseased wildlife. Diseased wildlife continue to spread brucellosis throughout the Greater Yellowstone Area, creating a constant threat to livestock and a potential disease threat to humans.
- Preserves community composition-keeps ranchers in the community, preserves open space, maintains rural culture.
- SB 237 ensures that the agencies are communicating with livestock producers. This allows information to flow both ways: producers can talk to agencies about risk changes they may see on the ground and the agencies can discuss their progress in disease management.

Don Vaniman  
Ranch Broker

Richard Grosskopf  
300-West Arrow Creek, Huntley MT  
406-860-1512

I would urge the Committee to vote in favor of SB 237 for above all, the simple fact that it puts the burden of addressing the disease issue on someone besides only the cattle breeder that carries the brunt of the disease because he has the end product of the disease chain. The STATE, COUNTY AND PRODUCER NEED THE HELP.

**Dick Grosskopf, ALC**  
**Broker / Owner**  
**Landmark of Billings, Inc.**  
**1925 Grand Avenue, #147**  
**Billings, MT 59102**  
**Office: (406) 248-3101**  
**Cell: (406) 860-1512**

**Website: [montanaranches.com](http://montanaranches.com)**

House Agriculture Committee,

Beaverhead County Commissioners would like to go on the record in strong support of SB237. The health of the livestock industry is vital to the economy of Beaverhead County as it is our #1 industry.

Commissioner Mike McGinley  
[mmcginley@co.beaverhead.mt.us](mailto:mmcginley@co.beaverhead.mt.us)

Commissioner Tom Rice  
[trice@co.beaverhead.mt.us](mailto:trice@co.beaverhead.mt.us)

Commissioner Garth Haugland  
[ghaugland@co.beaverhead.mt.us](mailto:ghaugland@co.beaverhead.mt.us)

2 South Pacific Street  
Dillon, Montana 59725-4000  
1-406-683-3750

**March 18, 2011**

**Montana House Agriculture Committee**

**Dear Committee Members,**

**I would like to encourage you to support SB 237 which addresses the inequities in the management of brucellosis in Montana. This bill will implement a coordinated approach to a problem that is causing enormous economic loss to livestock producers in Montana. It is essential that DOL and FWP work jointly to minimize the spread and cost of this disease. SB 237 provides flexibility on DSA's that are formed. Without SB 237 the DSA's will continue to expand causing a growing economic impact on livestock producers and ranching communities. FWP has got to address the issue from a management standpoint. As it is now, they identify elk that are brucellosis positive and use them for research to expand a DSA when they should be eliminating them from the herds and shrinking the prevalence of the disease in elk. SB 237 also insures that livestock producers are kept in the loop with the agencies regarding management and protocol changes.**

**I have been in the livestock industry most of my life and know of the economic challenges that we face. The wolf issue, brucellosis and bison have the potential of eliminating the basis for many of our communities. Ranchers provide the basis for biodiversity by maintaining open space, wildlife habitat and the scenic beauty that Montana is famous for. These issues, if not managed appropriately, will eliminate the profitability of our major economic sector.**

**So, please support this bill.**

**Thank you,**

**Lane Adamson  
Madison Valley Ranchlands Group  
PO Box 1515  
Ennis, Montana 59729  
1-406-682-3259**